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Up to the minute news from the worlds of amateur radio, personal computing and emerging electronics. While no guarantee is made, information is from sources we believe to be reliable. May be reproduced providing credit is given to The W5YI Report.

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HamNet thanks Fred Maia, W5YI, for permission to excerpt this Electronic Edition of his W5YI Report.

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Do you have Amateur Radio news to contribute to The W5YI Report? If so, please call (817) 461-6443 and leave a message on Fred's recorder!

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o ARRL Retains Lobby Group on 220-222 MHz Issue

An editorial entitled "Defending 220: The Battle Continues" appears in the December 1987 issue of QST, the monthly ham journal of the American Radio Relay League. It mentions that thousands of "well reasoned arguments" have poured into the Commission protesting the FCC proposal to reallocate the top two megahertz of the 220-225 MHz band to the Land Mobile Service Docket 87-

The editorial told how the League president, Larry Price W4RA, has visited each of the FCC Commissioners to underscore the importance of the 220-MHz ham band to the Amateur Radio Service.

The editorial, written by ARRL's Executive Vice President, Dave Sumner/K1ZZ, also mentions that the League has been working since last summer with "specialists in the field of congressional relations to identify and make use of every likely source of support on Capitol Hill."

The "specialists" that the ARRL refers to is actually a highly skilled legislative lobbyist organization. We believe this to be the first time that the League, a tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, has retained polished professionals to persuade members of Congress.

While QST did not further identify the group, we have learned that the firm retained is Chwat/Weigand Associates (400 First Street, NW, Suite #100; Washington, DC 20001). Government rules require that lobbyists representing the legislative interests of clients register and state their legislative interest to the Congressional Office of Records and Registration before acting in their behalf.

According to the October 24th issue of the Congressional Quarterly (Page 2634), Chwat/Weigand initially filed a lobby registration on August 10th, 1987, to represent the American Radio Relay League. Lobby interest was listed as "General legislative and regulatory interests relating to FCC Docket No. 87-14; 220-222 MHz issue." Further lobby reports must be filed quarterly.

We spoke to John Chwat, a partner in the firm, this past week to determine exactly how they were going about their job of representing the League in an effort to defeat Docket 87-14. Chwat, who was most pleasant and personable, said that he and his people were meeting with Senators and key Congressmen in an effort to reverse the FCC position.

A package of "information" has been prepared for Congressional use. John Chwat promised to send us a copy, but (as of press time) it has not been received. Meetings have been scheduled with the FCC staff. Chwat said he was working through the League's Washington Coordinator, Perry Williams/W1UED.

According to Chwat, the House Telecommunications Subcommittee has scheduled an important staff meeting with the FCC staff for November 24th. It is Chwat's intention that Congress' position on the 220-222 MHz issue will be clearly made known to the Commission. I asked John when he thought the FCC would be ruling on Docket 87-14. He said they "...may not get to it until March." In the meantime, Chwat/Weigand Associates will be making the legislative "rounds" on behalf of the amateur community.

o Interference to Appliances Update

Jack Ravenscroft, VE3SR, the Canadian amateur who was taken to court and found to be a "nuisance" is still off-the-air after two years. Ravenscroft's neighbors, Tim and Dale Houghtby, charged that his ham transmissions interfered with their appliances...namely their clock and table radio, television, electronic organ and furnace.

The court did not deal with the question of lack of appliance interference immunity instead found Ravenscroft guilty of being a public nuisance. He was fined $2,500 in punitive damages even though the Department of Communications gave Jack's amateur radio station a clean bill of health.

The verdict was appealed and the fine has been accumulating 13% interest ever since. The Houghtby's made an attempt to settle, but Ravenscroft refused. The settlement proposed by the Houghtby's involved an offer to sell their house and move if Ravenscroft would pay them $30,000.

The status of the case now is that both sides have submitted written arguments ("factum") to the Court of Appeal. The Houghtby's claim Ravenscroft has been uncooperative and probably has transmitted after being ordered off the air in 1985. They also say they have been given no assurances that interference suppression to their appliances will be completely successful.

They maintain that the argument that radio communication lies within the exclusive jurisdiction of the Federal Parliament and cannot be affected by Provincial law was not brought up at the original trial and therefore cannot be brought up on appeal. No date has been set for the appeal to be heard.

Ralph Cameron, VE3BBM, Chairman of the CARF's (Canadian Amateur Radio Federation) EMI Committee advises that many US amateurs have contributed to help Jack meet his legal expenses, to date over $39,000. The Ottawa Amateur Radio Club loaned the JRSD (Jack Ravenscroft Susceptibility Defense) Fund use of their PO Box #8873 (Ottawa, Ontario K1G 3J2) to receive donations.

[End this issue]